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## Kenyan running aces to help mark milestone for UN environment agency



Patrick Makau, Kenya's current marathon world record holder will be supporting the half-marathon for UNEP's 40th Anniversary Celebrations. Photo: UNEP

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Two top Kenyan long-distance runners will be on hand to show support for the conservation efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), joining the public in a half-marathon race in Nairobi later this month, to mark the agency's 40th anniversary.

UNEP, in partnership with the Paul Tergat Foundation and Athletics Kenya, has organized the 21-kilometre race on 19 February in which Mr. Tergat, who held the world marathon record from 2003 to 2007, and Patrick Makau, who set the new world record at last year's Berlin Marathon, will participate.

“The marathon in many ways is the starting gun for the global celebrations of UNEP's 40th anniversary, which appropriately will take place in Nairobi,” [said](#) Nick Nuttall, acting head of UNEP's Division of Communications and Public Information.

“It was in 1972, at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden, when governments agreed to set up UNEP and later that year chose Kenya to be its home, making it the first UN headquarters to be based in the developing world,” he added.

UNEP’s milestones over the past four decades include its role in the establishment of landmark international treaties that range from prohibiting trade in endangered species to ridding the world of health hazardous chemicals and pesticides.

In Kenya, UNEP recently provided support to the Kenyan Government to analyze the ecological and economic importance of the country’s Mau forest complex, which resulted in intensified efforts to restore the ecosystem.

“UNEP has also spearheaded the phase-out of lead in petrol in Africa which means people here are no longer exposed to a heavy metal that damages the brains of babies and infants,” said Mr. Nuttall.

The event on 19 February will coincide with the opening of the 12th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF). Representatives from 150 countries who will attend the meeting are being invited to participate in a shorter five-kilometre race.

“Globally, the relationship between sports and environment has been growing steadily so much so that the environment is now a key consideration in almost all sports planning activities,” said Mr. Tergat. “Every athlete requires a clean environment for optimum performance in his or her career,” he said.

UNEP has since 1994 been integrating its work on the environment with sport. It advises countries and sports federations on incorporating environmental considerations into all major sporting events

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